

SOAR (Safety Observations Achieve Results) Process

Description

It is the strategy of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) to establish and sustain a Behavior Based Safety (BBS) process to significantly impact workplace at-risk exposures and injuries. The BBS process at the INL is entitled SOAR (Safety Observations Achieve Results). The SOAR process promotes safe work practices through enhanced worker awareness. SOAR is an employee involvement and worksite analysis tool within the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) and it supports the INL vision of an injury-free workplace by reinforcing safe behaviors and eliminating at-risk behaviors.

The INL SOAR Process provides a way to measure observed behaviors against defined standards. Observation and feedback discussions are the essence of the process and provide mechanisms for positively reinforcing safe behaviors and seeking commitments to improve at-risk behaviors. The aim of the observation and feedback process is to prevent exposures and injuries in the workplace. It is a proactive approach to safety performance improvement. Implementation is achieved with trained observers committed to performing observations with a work force that accepts their value. The essential elements of the SOAR process includes the involvement of all employees, one to one feedback, the collection of observation data, data-driven decision-making processes, and management's visible, on-going support.

The SOAR process is directed by the SOAR/BBS Subject Matter Expert (SME) and at the field level is managed by the local employee safety teams (EST). SOAR leadership roles and responsibilities are described below.

SOAR Observers are trained in the proper approach and techniques for performing observations. The Observers emphasize the reinforcement of safe behaviors and as needed provide input to correct at-risk behaviors plus discuss with the observee "why" certain behaviors were demonstrated during the work evolution. Data gathered through observations is entered into the laboratory-level SOAR database. During an observation, the individual observation data is not analyzed, nor is the identity of the person being observed identified. Rather, behavioral trends are reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted by the SOAR coordinator and local EST teams for the purpose of developing corrective actions and increasing safe behaviors. The purpose of data management is to analyze the data, produce appropriate reports and graphs, and prepare data packages to assist the EST and management in making safety improvement decisions. Observation analyses are communicated to employees.

Performance Indicators

1. Percent Safe and Percent At-Risk Behaviors – Calculated from observation data. Data to be generated monthly on an incremental and cumulative basis. A top ten will be generated with the top behavior (may include top 2 & 3 if appropriate based on percentages) the focus (communications, training, etc.) for the following month.
2. Contact Rate – Total observations as a percentage of population.
3. Percent active Observers (Observer participation rate) – The number of active observers divided by total number of people in the population and as a percentage of the observer population. The number of active observers to total population will be for comparisons of the ratio of observers to total population for month to month and area (site, etc.) to area to establish and monitor the level of effort. The percentage of the observer population will show the effort within that population for the previously said comparisons among the observer population.

4. Action Plans Issued and completed per Month (BBS SME, EST) – A data driven corrective action plan that addresses an at risk behavior. The number of action plans issued; and, action plan status metrics.
5. Observation sheet comment quality – Semi-qualitative assessment of the accuracy and completeness of checklists; and, at-risks behaviors are accompanied by well-written comments that describe ‘what’ was at-risk and ‘why’ the worker said they were doing it.
6. Coaching Effectiveness – Number of observations completed with a coach/mentor, or how many coaching/mentoring contacts were made per observer per month.

Indicators are subject to change dependent on the evolution of the program. Error precursor Top Ten, comment report output, and key word search of comments to be programmed in database to support analysis.

Roles & Responsibilities

Environmental Safety Health & Quality (ESH&Q), Directorate

ESH&Q is the primary organizational sponsor of the SOAR process

L/MT Sponsor to SOAR

The L/MT sponsor to the SOAR SC is responsible for providing vision and removing roadblocks for the SOAR process and serving as liaison between the SOAR SC and the leadership management team.

SOAR Steering Committee (SOAR SC)

The laboratory SOAR SC is responsible for:

- Promoting, championing, and supporting involvement in worker safety
- Attend SOAR team meeting(s)
- Facilitate the implementation of SOAR in your respective areas (may include BBS and BBS Observation Training)
- Developing and issuing a charter, Strategic plan and Implementation plan
- Monitoring laboratory-wide implementation of the SOAR process
- Establishing the laboratory master observation checklist
- Establishing the process performance indicators
- Establishing and communicating the management critical behaviors
- Seeking and sharing new educational and training materials with the ESTs
- Promoting positive reinforcement (R+) of individual and team successes (observers, observees, or EST) and sharing lessons learned and best safety practices throughout INL to ensure the most effective implementation of SOAR/BBS principles
- Coordinating the integration of SOAR/BBS concepts and practices with other INL initiatives, e.g., Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS), Human Performance and Voluntary Protection Program
- Utilizing the L/MT as appropriate for the most effective implementation of SOAR concepts and action plans throughout INL
- Conducting periodic assessments to measure effectiveness of the SOAR process in reducing the risk of injuries to employees both on an off-site
- Periodically benchmarking INL SOAR/BBS implementation with best practices of other successful initiatives external to the Laboratory.

SOAR/BBS SME

- Direct the SOAR [BBS] process laboratory wide
- Provide technical direction to the L/M team and VPP management champions
- Strategize with the VPP Program Coordinator to institutionalize BBS into the VPP process
- Strategize with the Center of Human Performance to incorporate techniques and tools of human performance into the SOAR process
- Interact with the EST Chairs via the VPP Program Coordinator and the LEST co-chair
- Chair the SOAR Steering Team
- Publish and distribute the SOAR Strategic Plan and Implementation plan
- Publish and distribute the SOAR Steering Team charter
- Manage the observation database
- Provide the technical input for SOAR training and education
- Be the focal point for laboratory wide communications regarding SOAR
- Provide recommendations mitigating at-risk behaviors that impact the workplace laboratory wide
- Provide input to the Annual DOE VPP Report
- Participate in the VPP Annual Evaluation (Nov)
- Manage the SOAR budget
- Status BBS performance indicators.

SOAR Coaches

- Attend SOAR team meeting(s).
- Facilitate the implementation of SOAR in your respective areas (may include BBS and BBS Observation Training).
- Serve as the sub-team chair for SOAR on their respective EST.
- Recruit sub-team members as needed.
- Using sub-team members and other expertise retrieve and distribute reports from the database and interpret the observation data then communicate results at the monthly EST meetings. Provide recommendations mitigating at-risk behaviors.
- Facilitate job/task specific observation checklists.
- Mentor trained observers.
- Encourage/participate in area DO-IT(s).
- Enter observation data into database as needed.
- Communicate successes and post SOAR information on display/bulletin boards.

Employee Safety Team(s)

The ESTs serve as the focal point for the BBS process. The ESTs are responsible for:

- Allotting sufficient time during the EST meeting to analyze the observation data and develop effective action plans. Action plans are tracked to completion.
- Develop area specific checklists as appropriate.
- Encourage active observer involvement.
- Provide positive reinforcement to all employees as appropriate.
- Mentor/coach observers and potential observers.
- Communicate safety improvement information to employees in the area.

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Performing work safely
- Participating in SOAR/BBS training as it is provided
- Volunteer to be an observer
- Taking a time-out when there is an emerging safety concern that could result in a safety event
- Asking to be observed, and being open to receiving feedback.

SOAR Observers

SOAR Observers receive formal observer training prior to conducting observations. When they perform observations they observe work that is being performed during routine day-to-day operations.

They are responsible for:

- performing observations
- recording the observations on the checklist and entering the data into the laboratory SOAR observation database
- providing input to the local employee safety team.

Line Management

Line management is responsible for:

- supporting the SOAR process by demonstrating the critical management behaviors
 - Attend and stay involved in SOAR training and education processes
 - Achieve a basic understanding of SOAR concepts including positive reinforcement
 - Routinely attend (but not take over) EST meetings
 - Stay cognizant of EST actions, issues and barriers
 - Provide sufficient priority, time and support for SOAR observations
- promoting and providing positive reinforcement (R+) of individual safe behaviors and successes
- removing barriers.